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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KINGSTON 001802

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR (BENT) AND WHA/PDA  
STATE ALSO FOR INL/LP, EB/TPP, AND EB/IFD  
STATE ALSO FOR CA/OCS/ACS/WHA (RUTH BRANSON)  
STATE PASS OPIC FOR TABERNAKI  
CUSTOMS MIAMI FOR LOWEN AND MAHABIR  
SANTO DOMINGO FOR FCS, FAS, AND LEGATT  
STATE PASS USTR FOR A. GASH-DURKIN  
DOJ FOR OPDAT/ R LIPMAN  
TREASURY FOR L LAMONICA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EFIN](#) [ECON](#) [EINV](#) [KCRM](#) [CASC](#) [JM](#) [UNGA](#) [TIP](#)  
SUBJECT: KINGSTON POL/ECON ROUNDUP: JULY 1-21, 2005

REF: KINGSTON 01784

[1](#)1. This week's topics:

- Hurricanes Cause More Damage in Jamaica
- Government Leads Opposition in National Poll
- Police Raids Target Trafficking Victims
- Murder Leading Cause of Death in Males
- Jamaica Opens Embassy in Beijing
- President of Ghana Visits Jamaica
- Tranquility Bay Runaways Found

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Hurricanes Cause More Damage in Jamaica  
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[1](#)2. Two recent hurricanes caused serious damage in Jamaica, mostly due to heavy rains and flooding. Parts of the island are inaccessible as a result of bridge failures, which have cut off the major thoroughfare between Kingston and Ocho Rios and have isolated the western parishes of Portland and St. Thomas. Hurricane Dennis passed to the northeast of Jamaica on July 6-7, sending thousands of residents to storm shelters. The Planning Institute of Jamaica has preliminarily estimated damage from the storm at just under USD 33 million.

[1](#)3. Hurricane Emily was a category 4 storm when it passed to the south of Jamaica on July 16 with winds up to 155 miles per hour. While most of the island was out of reach of dangerous winds, heavy rains caused flooding and damage, particularly in the parish of St. Elizabeth. The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) is conducting assessments of the scope of the storm's damage. Meanwhile, the Office of National Reconstruction, established in September 2004 to coordinate recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Ivan, announced on July 21 that it would complete its work by November 2005. The government also announced that checks for 65,000 people affected in 2004 by Hurricane Ivan would be distributed this week.

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Government Leads Opposition in National Poll  
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[1](#)4. According to a recent national poll of more than one thousand registered voters, the governing People's National Party (PNP) leads the opposition Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) by just over two percentage points. The position represents a reversal from July 2004, when the JLP led the government by two percent. The poll, commissioned by the Jamaica Gleaner, showed that 30.5 percent of respondents indicated they would vote for the PNP, while 28.4 percent favored the JLP. Don Anderson of Market Research Services, which conducted the poll for the newspaper, said that PNP support is strongest among middle and lower income residents, females, and those aged 25 to 44. The JLP, on the other hand, gained its support primarily from males, young voters, and those in both the upper income and lower income levels.

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Police Raids Target Trafficking Victims  
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[1](#)5. The Jamaica Constabulary Force conducted at least three raids during the week of July 11 that targeted victims of trafficking in persons (TIP). Jamaica was downgraded to Tier 3 in the 2005 TIP Report, and the police raids coincided with the visit of Department officials to Kingston to evaluate progress by the GOJ to investigate and prosecute suspected trafficking cases. The visit was positive, as the GOJ demonstrated some significant actions taken to combat TIP (reftel). Details of the police raids and other anti-TIP efforts will be reported septel.

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## Murder Leading Cause of Death in Males

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16. According to Dr. Elizabeth Ward, director of disease prevention and control in the Ministry of Health, homicide is now the fifth leading cause of death in Jamaica, and the leading cause of death among males in Jamaica regardless of age. The Jamaica Constabulary Force reported on July 19 that there had been more than 945 murders to date in 2005, which represents an annualized 2005 total of approximately 1,600 murders, or a 10 percent increase over last year's total, which was the highest in Jamaica's history.

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## Jamaica Opens Embassy in Beijing

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17. Foreign Minister K.D. Knight was in Beijing on July 18 to open Jamaica's new Embassy in the Chinese capitol. At the opening ceremony, attended by Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, Knight made remarks in which he reaffirmed Jamaica's commitment to the one-China policy and expressed his hope that the Sino-Jamaican bilateral relationship would include enhanced cooperation in trade, mining, and tourism, according to Xinhua News Agency. The opening of the new Jamaican embassy comes after February's visit to Jamaica of a large Chinese trade delegation that included Vice President Zeng Qinhong, and Prime Minister PJ Patterson's June visit to Beijing, where the two countries signed bauxite and education agreements. Jamaica's Ambassador to China is Wayne McCook, former Senior Director of Foreign Trade at the MFA. The Foreign Ministry reported that the embassy will be staffed by a total of three officers.

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## President of Ghana Visits Jamaica

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18. President of the Republic of Ghana John Agyekum Kufuor visited Jamaica from July 11-13 with his foreign and trade ministers for discussions that included the expansion of both countries, aluminum industries. Following the delegation's visit to a Jamalco refinery in Clarendon, Prime Minister Patterson announced that Jamaica would share its expertise in mining and aluminum, and would provide alumina to Ghana's newly expanded smelting plant. According to Patterson, discussions with the Ghanaian delegation also included UN Security Council reform and negotiations with the EU for regional economic partnership agreements.

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## Tranquility Bay Runaways Found

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19. St. Elizabeth police searched for several days for two students from the Tranquility Bay reform school in Treasure Beach who left the premises without permission on July 16. The two boys, who were able to evade security guards during Hurricane Emily, were missing until the school on July 20 offered a USD 1,000 reward for information of their whereabouts. The boys were found the same day and returned to Tranquility Bay.

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